



# *CITY COUNCIL*

## *Evidentiary Hearing*

**HARB Appeal Hearing  
332 N 5th Street  
Tuesday, October 29, 2013  
Council Chambers  
5:00 p.m.**

The City of Reading Historic Architectural Review Board (HARB) holds monthly hearings to consider approving Certificates of Appropriateness for exterior property improvements for properties located within the City's five (5) historic districts. Applicants have the ability to appeal the decision of the HARB to the City of Reading City Council. This evidentiary hearing is was scheduled at the request of the owner of 332 N 5<sup>th</sup> Street, who is appealing the HARB's denial of the installation of vinyl replacement windows on the first floor front facade.

### **I. Testimony from Applicant (No more than 5 minutes)**

During the hearing process, applicants are cautioned not to address the Administrative staff present but to make their presentation directly to City Council. The applicant may ask the President of Council or the Hearing Master to relay a question to Administrative staff.

**332 N 5<sup>th</sup> Street, Steven and Rich Gill, Owners**

**Composite Index Rating: 84**

### **Council's Cross Examination**

### **II. Testimony from City Staff (No more than 5 minutes)**

- **Historic Specialist**

### **III. Other Testimony and Evidence**

### **IV. Rebuttal by Applicant (No more than 5 minutes)**

**V. Public Comment** (No More than 3 minutes per speaker)

**VI. Announcement of expected date of decision**

City Council will render a decision by adopting resolution at the October 14th Regular Meeting of Council.

**VII. Adjourn**

**Background Information:**

**READING HISTORICAL ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD  
CITY OF READING, PENNSYLVANIA  
July 16, 2013**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

The monthly meeting of the Reading Historical Architectural Review Board was held on Tuesday, July 16, 2013 in the Planning Conference Room, Room 3-03, Reading, PA. At 7:00 PM, Mr. Booth called the meeting to order. Mr. Booth asked if there were any conflicts of interest. Mr. Hart stated that would abstain from the project at 144 N. 5<sup>th</sup> St.

**A. Roll Call:**

**Members present:** Aaron Booth, Peter Hart, Cynthia LaSota, Bill Sands, Allen Webster and Erin Weller.

**Visitors present:**

Tania Salas, 134 N. 5<sup>th</sup> St.

Daniel Laws Jr., 500 Penn St.

Juan Soriano, 515 Minor St.

Steven Gill, 332 N. 5th St.

Bill Marzano, 244 N. 5th St.

Ian Womack, 505 Penn St.

Jim Maroulis, 505 Penn St.

Paul Kellett, 144 N. 5<sup>th</sup> St.

Akash Gulati, 352 Penn St.

Brandon Danzig, 352 Penn St.

Laura Cooper, 126-128 N. 5<sup>th</sup> St.

**Press present:** Carole Duran, Reading Eagle

**Staff present:** Amy W. Johnson

**Consultant present:** Christine Ussler and associate, Beth Starbuck

**B. Minutes:** No minutes were reviewed or approved.

**II. HEARING OF APPLICATIONS:**

**ITEM #5 – RESOLUTION #41-13** - It is proposed to retain two white vinyl replacement windows on the first floor (which includes the infill of the window arch) at the first floor front façade and painting of exterior surfaces (Violation) at 332 N. 5th St., Reading, PA.

**Property Owner:** S & R Property Management

**Owner's Address:** 2903 Gateway Dr., Limerick, PA 19468

**Applicant:** Rich Gill

**Applicant's Address:** P.O. Box 7, Maxatawny, PA 19538

**Building description, period, style, defining features:** This 3-story, attached, residential, brick building is located in the Callowhill Historic District. It features a heavily bracketed cornice and a two-story bay window. All other 1-over-1, double-hung windows (other than those in the bay window) and the door opening have hoods with carved keystones. There are 1/2-round arches on the first floor, elliptical on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and segmental on the 3<sup>rd</sup>. The entry door has a semi-circular transom and thin, non-historic sidelights. The building is Italianate in style and was built late in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.

**Composite Index Rating:** 84

**Proposed alterations:** It is proposed to retain two white vinyl replacement windows (which includes the infill of the window arch) at the first floor front façade and painting of exterior surfaces. (Violation).

**Guideline Citation:** **SIS 2.** The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterized a property shall be avoided. **SIS 9.** New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.

**Evaluation, effect on historic district, recommendations:** The windows in this structure were a character defining historic feature. The vinyl windows are not historically appropriate. The missing glass in the upper sash of the first floor windows should be installed (arched glass ) and the missing bottom sashes should be replaced with new milled wood sash. (The 2<sup>nd</sup> floor window? should be replaced with a shorter window to allow for a transom.)

**Discussion:** The applicant explained that there had been a fire and that the window replacement was done in haste to secure the building. The applicant said he had "called around" and found that this was the largest window made. He ordered the window from Home Depot. The Historic Preservation Consultant stressed that the windows and the curved glass upper sash are a character defining features of the building. It was evident in the photos submitted with the application that the vinyl windows were installed behind the historic frames and that the original upper sash frame remained in place. She pointed out that replacing the glass in the upper sash and finding a new wood bottom sash which fit the window, would be the least expensive way to remedy the violation. HARB members agreed that it would not be historically appropriate to let the vinyl windows remain in place. There was a question about the window on the second floor which clearly had been changed since the 10/22/2008 photograph of the building on file. However, the applicant had owned the building only for 2 years and had not modified the second floor window. The Historic Preservation Specialist affirmed that the second floor windows were approved for replacement in September of 2009 before the new HARB Window Policy went into effect. Because the windows were modified without HARB approval, the applicant should complete the recommended work within 180 days.

**Motion:** The Historical Architectural Review Board upon motion by Mr. Hart and seconded by Ms. LaSota adopted the proposal to issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for the proposed work described herein:

1. The proposal to retain two white vinyl windows at the first floor front façade at 332 N. 5<sup>th</sup> St., was presented by Steven Gill.
2. Based on the Secretary of the Interior's Standard #2 (The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterized a property shall be avoided.), the proposal to retain two white vinyl windows at the first floor front façade was denied. The vinyl replacement windows are not historically appropriate.
3. Because the upper sash of the original, character defining, wood windows are still in place, the glass must be replaced in these two upper sashes; and two wood lower sashes fitting the historic wood window frame must be constructed and installed.

4. Because the replacement windows are in violation (they were installed without HARB approval), the work must be completed within 180 days.

The above work was unanimously approved.